

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-3902

February 12, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

I write to request that you take immediate action to fill the three vacancies on the United States Postal Service (USPS) Board of Governors in order to restore the Board's intended bipartisan composition and to ensure that its members remove and replace Postmaster General Louis DeJoy. Throughout his tenure, Postmaster General DeJoy has displayed abysmal leadership, resulting in significant delays in mail delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic. Vacancies on the board must be filled to ensure that the USPS has the leadership necessary to address its current challenges and to prevent further damage by Postmaster General DeJoy.

As you know, the COVID-19 pandemic has posed significant challenges for the USPS. Since the start of the pandemic, thousands of postal employees have fallen ill with the virus, and curtailed economic activity has caused an unprecedented decline in mail volume. In fiscal year (FY) 2020, first-class mail declined by 4.2% and marketing mail declined by 15.2%, equating to an overall decline of 13.8 billion pieces of mail.<sup>[1]</sup> Despite declines in mail volume, there was a corresponding surge in shipping and packages, which increased by 18.8% in FY 2020, and by 42.1% in the first quarter of FY 2021 compared to the first quarter of FY 2020.<sup>[2]</sup> According to the USPS FY 2020 report, this increase was due to the pandemic-induced reliance on e-commerce.<sup>[3]</sup> Importantly, this displays that the USPS is an essential service during this pandemic, as many Americans have increased their reliance on the USPS to deliver their necessities while they maintain social distance and stay home whenever possible.

Despite the clear and present need for a reliable Postal Service, the Trump Administration took action to politicize the USPS and undermine its operations. As you know, the USPS Board of Governors, which consists of a maximum of nine members, may have no more than five members who belong to the same political party.<sup>[4]</sup> The Trump Administration intentionally left multiple Democratic positions on the Board of Governors vacant, thus creating a conservative board loyal to the Republican Party. Subsequently, the Board of Governors instated Postmaster General DeJoy, a major Trump and Republican Party donor, who assumed office on June 15, 2020. With little regard for service standards, Postmaster General DeJoy immediately implemented drastic operational changes, including the removal of mail-sorting machines and postal collection boxes, the reduction of overtime labor, and altered delivery schedules. Enacting such changes during a global pandemic was reckless, and doing so in the months leading up to the 2020 Presidential Election, which relied heavily on legal mail-in ballots, posed a threat to our democracy. Although Postmaster General DeJoy halted many of these changes after receiving overwhelming opposition from the American public and from elected officials, certain changes that

<sup>[1]</sup> <https://about.usps.com/newsroom/national-releases/2020/1113-usps-reports-fiscal-year-2020-results.htm>

<sup>[2]</sup> <https://about.usps.com/newsroom/national-releases/2021/0209-usps-reports-first-quarter-fiscal-2021-results.htm>

<sup>[3]</sup> <https://about.usps.com/newsroom/national-releases/2020/1113-usps-reports-fiscal-year-2020-results.htm>

<sup>[4]</sup> 39 U.S.C. § 202 (a)(1)

had already been made were not reversed and continue to adversely affect mail delivery. This reached a significant low around the 2020 Christmas holiday when only 64% of first-class mail was delivered on time.<sup>[5]</sup>

During Postmaster General DeJoy's tenure, I've heard from more than 2,000 constituents with concerns about USPS operations. Rhode Islanders have informed me of instances when bills, medications, and other important items have failed to arrive on time due to delays in mail delivery. This has caused unnecessary fear and consternation, and must be addressed immediately. Postmaster General DeJoy has demonstrated that he is incapable of leading the USPS, and to that end, I urge you to take action to remove him from his post. Although you, as President, cannot directly remove the Postmaster General, you have the opportunity to appoint three nominees to fill the vacancies on the USPS Board of Governors. I encourage you to do so promptly, and once the new nominees are confirmed by the Senate, should the Board of Governors not take action to instate a competent Postmaster General, I encourage you to use your authority to remove and replace any member of the USPS Board of Governors who refuses to do so.<sup>[6]</sup>

The USPS is a time-honored institution that supports our economy and our communities and provides Americans with access to important services. Ensuring its continued success is among my top priorities, and I look forward to working with your Administration to improve its services and ensure its long-term sustainability.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James R. Langevin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath it.

James R. Langevin  
Member of Congress

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<sup>[5]</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/01/19/upshot/postal-service-survived-election-but-crushed-by-holidays.html>

<sup>[6]</sup> 39 U.S.C. § 202 (a)(1)